



## QUESTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSIONER NOMINEE

By: Nicole Dube, Principal Analyst

### COMMISSIONER OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (CGS § [17A-210](#))

The commissioner administers the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), including the operation of the Southbury training school, intellectual disability regions, and state-operated residential facilities. The commissioner plans, develops, and implements programs and services for people with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder; investigates allegations of abuse against such people; and develops eligibility criteria for their placement in public or private residential care.

### QUESTIONS

1. Describe the department's mission as you see it. As commissioner, how will you ensure that the department meets this mission? What particular experience, expertise, and other assets do you bring to the department?
2. Do you believe that the department has the adequate resources, in terms of both personnel and budget, to meet its obligations under the law?
3. How many people are currently on the department's waiting list for residential service placement? How many are in the emergency category? Have these numbers changed substantially in the past few years? What approaches will you use to reduce the waiting list? How will these approaches balance consumers' clinical needs with state budgetary constraints?
4. Please describe the current activities of the department's Division of Autism Spectrum Services and your vision for its future.

5. Current educational best practice is to include students with developmental and intellectual disabilities, regardless of their grade level ability, in classrooms with students their own ages. Does DDS have any role in helping school districts train regular classroom teachers in inclusion methods? Does it help parents advocate for their children in the school system? Does inclusion pose any drawbacks for children with disabilities?
6. Does DDS or its private providers have any problems finding sites for group homes? How does DDS work with communities in choosing sites?
7. What changes would you like to make in DDS operations over the next four years?
8. There has been considerable debate in recent years regarding the closing of Southbury Training School, which currently houses approximately 320 residents. This session, the legislature's bipartisan Intellectual and Developmental Disability Caucus called for the school's closure by 2020. Do you have any comments on this issue?
9. Other than lack of funding, what do you consider to be the biggest challenge to increasing access to services for individuals with intellectual disabilities?
10. 2014 legislation ([PA 14-165](#)) created a process for investigating claims of abuse or neglect of people with autism spectrum disorder. Can you please describe the department's role in this process?

ND:tjo